



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 15 November 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
15 NOVEMBER 1968

1. South Vietnam

There is nothing new at hand to support the Associated Press story this morning that Prime Minister Huong has submitted his resignation to President Thieu. Reuters says that a spokesman for Huong has "strongly denied" the report.

2. France

The possibility of a forced devaluation of the franc is not nearly so absurd as De Gaulle pretends, but a lot could happen to save the franc over the next few weeks. France is suffering from a classic case of capital flight at a time when there is the need for financial pump-priming at home. The franc is leaving home to purchase the attractively hard German mark across the border.

The French, unwilling to dampen their economic recovery by strong deflationary measures, want the Germans to revalue the mark upwards; this would take most of the pressure off the franc. The Germans have been saying "make your own corrective measures," but have apparently agreed to meet with the French to discuss the problem.

If the run on the franc continues at its present rate, De Gaulle will be forced to sell back large chunks of his American gold and approve more stringent internal controls. His adamant views against devaluation suggest that he is ready to do both.

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3. World Communist Conference

Many of the world's Communist parties will meet in Budapest on Sunday to try to set a date for the international conference. Last spring a preparatory meeting agreed to set 25 November as the date, but it was dropped as a result of the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Six weeks of intensive Soviet lobbying followed, and the Soviets will now try to pin down a new date for the meeting.

The French Communist Party, which had been defiant since the invasion, gave in to severe tongue-lashings during talks in Moscow early this month.

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Talks between the Soviets and an Italian party delegation now in Moscow will probably be equally stormy, although the Italians may be less easy to win over.

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4. Middle East

We may well see more and more of the kind of thing that happened along the Israeli-Jordanian border on Wednesday when a minor small arms exchange quickly evolved into an extended fire-fight involving mortars, tanks, and artillery. Now that the Jarring mission is stalled, the Israelis have probably taken off the wraps on retaliation for border incidents.

5. Soviet Union

Zond-6.

passed around the moon,

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and is now returning to earth.

The probe will reach the earth's atmosphere early Sunday morning.

6. Peru

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U.S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Two Administrations in the South?: A Vietnamese Communist official has hinted strongly that the Communists may envision a temporary territorial arrangement between Saigon and the Front as part of a process leading to a political settlement. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Although Communist propaganda frequently decries continued allied military activity in the South, the Communists previously have not directly tied the level of military activity there to prospects in Paris.

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Hanoi Atmospherics: The North Vietnamese Government was slow in informing the citizens of Hanoi about the US bombing halt, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The diplomatic community and local citizens got their first information on the US action on 1 November from broadcasts originating in other countries. The government did not report it on the air until 2 November. [REDACTED]

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[redacted] no public demonstrations or celebrations accompanying the announcement. The government's proclamation, in fact, called for continued vigilance and sacrifice, presumably to forestall a general mood of relaxation.

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Hanoi was also cautious in announcing its reaction to the diplomatic corps. Vietnamese officials reportedly tried to avoid entrapment by foreign diplomats at an Algerian reception on the evening of 1 November. The Vietnamese left the reception discreetly only about an hour after their arrival.

[redacted] diplomats were told early on the morning of 2 November.

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Hanoi's statement was finally delivered to foreign correspondents and broadcast locally at about 10:00 that morning.

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Hanoi Protests Alleged US Action in Cambodia:
Hanoi has issued another of its periodic denunciations of alleged US violations of Cambodian territory. The foreign ministry statement, carried in a French language international broadcast on 14 November, charged that US helicopters twice violated Cambodian airspace on 6 November in areas opposite South Vietnam's III Corps and fired on Cambodian civilians.

The foreign office statement charged the US with numerous Cambodian border violations since June and, with righteous indignation, expressed its support of earlier Cambodian protests and demands that the US recognize Cambodia's borders.

More of this type of propaganda may be forthcoming as part of an effort by Hanoi to distract attention from the recent NBC exposé of Viet Cong activity in Cambodia.

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The depth of the channel into Haiphong harbor, which was 28 feet at average mean tide when Soviet dredging equipment was removed for safety in May 1965, now averages about 26 feet. The Soviet dredging equipment which began operating again last spring has kept conditions from getting any worse, but apparently has not yet caught up with the silting of the previous three years. Large, heavily laden ships must either wait for an optimum high tide before entering the harbor or unload a portion of their cargo into lighters in order to clear the channel into the port.

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New Missile Site: Photography of 10 November has disclosed a new surface-to-air missile site near Yen Bai airfield, northwest of Hanoi. This is the first active missile installation seen in this area for nearly a year. The purpose of the new site remains unclear at the moment, but it is probably intended to play an antireconnaissance role.

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Work Continues on New Airfield: Photography also shows that the North Vietnamese are rapidly moving ahead with construction on the recently discovered airfield at Duong Suong southwest of Hanoi. The presence of some ten pieces of construction equipment suggests a fairly high priority has been assigned to this project. The construction of Yen Bai airfield took about two years to complete. Work on Duong Suong began in early October and could be completed as early as next summer.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report.

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